

received immediately from him, and bearing that name on their labels, existed and perhaps even still exist, though unfortunately not in the British Museum. Several of such specimens I, in former years, have examined (a good many more, indeed, than Mr. Sharpe has ever seen); and I can confirm the suggestion made more than ten years since (*Ibis*, 1862, p. 50, note) that Holböll's *F. arcticus* was founded upon the adults of the Greenland and of the Iceland form, under the mistaken idea that the latter were the young of the former. That Mr. Sharpe's "new species" is "as distinct from the true Iceland Jer Falcon as is the Jer Falcon of Norway," can, I think, be hardly likely; for I have not been able to detect any proportional difference in the Greenland form (*F. candicans*) and the Icelandier (*F. islandus*), while the "new species" is obviously intermediate between them. On the other hand, the difference in proportion between the Icelandier and the real Gyrfalcon (*F. gyrfalco*) is, as I have elsewhere shown (*Yarrell's Brit. Birds*, edit. 4, i. pp. 47, 48), very considerable.

I am, &c.,

ALFRED NEWTON.

Magdalene College, Cambridge,
November 20, 1873.

LVII.—*Descriptions of three new Species of Asiatic Birds.*

By ARTHUR, Viscount WALDEN, P.Z.S., F.R.S., &c.

Alcedo rufigastra, n. sp.

Chin and throat creamy white, washed faintly with rufous; remainder of under surface, the under tail-coverts, and wing-coverts deep bright rufous; spot before the eye rufous, paler in some than in others; feathers of the head black, with a penultimate bright blue band, those of the cheeks all bright blue; back and upper tail-coverts bright blue; wing-coverts black, washed with blue, each feather tipped with bright blue; scapulars and rectrices black, washed with blue.

Wing 2·5 inches, tail 1·62, bill from nostril 1·37.

Described from three male examples obtained in the island of South Andaman by Lieutenant R. Wardlaw Ramsay.

This is a well-marked form, intermediate between *A. moluccensis* and *A. asiatica*. Above it nearly resembles the first; underneath it is undistinguishable from the last.

Pomatorhinus ochraceiceps, n. sp.

Lores black; ear-coverts brown, washed with ochreous;

supercilium (commencing at the base of the maxilla and reaching to the sides of the neck), chin, cheeks, throat, breast, and shoulder-edge pure unsullied white; crown and nape bright ochreous ferruginous; back and upper tail-coverts ochreous olive; wings when closed ochreous brown; middle rectrices brown, washed with ochreous, remainder with outer webs coloured like the middle pair; inner webs pure brown; the terminal portion of all the rectrices hardly tinged with ochreous; abdomen, flanks, thigh, and under tail-coverts ochreous brown, the ventral region exhibiting a brighter ferruginous tint; bill yellow, probably red in the fresh skin.

Wing 3.62 inches, tail 4.87, tarsus 1.25, bill from nostril (in a straight line) 1.00.

Hab. Kareen Hills, Burma.

Munia fumigata, n. sp.

Above dark brown, deeper on the head; rump white; quills above and externally deep brown, on the borders of the inner webs pale tawny rufous, most developed on the secondaries and tertiaries; tail jet-black, the middle pair of rectrices being slightly elongated; chin, throat, and cheeks concolorous with the head; ear-coverts brown, with pale edgings; breast, abdomen, and flanks dingy white, the breast-feathers with brown spots; thigh and under tail-coverts brown, with rusty margins.

Wing 2.00 inches, tail 1.75, tarsus 0.50.

Described from examples obtained by Lieutenant R. W. Ramsay in the island of South Andaman. Nearly allied to *M. acuticauda*, Hodgs., but to be readily distinguished by the absence of pale shafts to the dorsal plumage.

LVIII.—*Reply to Dr. J. E. Gray's Observations on certain Species of Sponges described in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1873.* By Dr. J. S. BOWERBANK, F.R.S. &c.

DR. GRAY has made so many inaccurate assertions in his observations on my descriptions of some sponges in the 'Proc. Zool. Soc.' for 1873, that I must request space to correct his misapprehensions on these subjects. Had he confined himself to legitimate criticisms on the subject, I should not have thought it necessary to controvert his hastily formed opinions. In these explanations I shall follow the order in which Dr. Gray has treated these matters in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' for September 1873.